

get to the bottom of what happened that day and who was responsible for it.

You might remember that there was a proposal from Speaker PELOSI that we create a bipartisan Commission wherein the House and Senate Democrats and Republicans would turn this matter over, as we have before to a group, to determine what happened that day and what was behind it to avoid its ever happening again and to get one clear definition for history from this bipartisan Commission.

The Commission idea was stopped by Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader in the Senate. He refused to agree on this bipartisan approach. So Speaker PELOSI, realizing she had a scant majority in the House, said that she was going to still try to put such an investigation together. She invited Republican participation, which didn't work out well. Eventually, two stepped forward—Congresswoman CHENEY and Congressman KINZINGER—and said they would participate.

I know ADAM KINZINGER. He is from my State. We have worked on a few things together. I respect him for his political courage time and again to speak out as he has. I am sorry that he was the subject of that censure.

Sadly, that was not the only mistake made in the Salt Lake City Republican revisionary meeting. What was even worse, if anything could be worse, was the declaration by the Republican National Committee that what happened in this building—in this room—on January 6, 2021, was somehow characterized by a unanimous vote as legitimate political discourse.

The Acting President pro tempore remembers that day, and I do, too. I can't forget it. It was when Vice President Pence was sitting where you are today, and a few minutes after 2 o'clock, the Secret Service came in and whisked him off the platform. We were told there was an attack on the Capitol taking place.

Earlier, there had been a rally, sponsored by President Trump, and he had incited this insurrectionist mob to come up to the Capitol to be heard and seen. They knew why that day was chosen. January 6 was the day we were counting the electoral college vote—the official vote on the selection of Joseph Biden as President of the United States. It was the intention of President Trump and those who came here to interrupt that constitutional process.

It is interesting as well that last week, Vice President Pence, at a Federalist Society meeting, spoke out on the subject and said for the first time that I can recall since he was chosen as Vice President that, in fact, President Trump was wrong—wrong in believing that he had the power as Vice President to change the electoral college vote. Pence made it clear that he did not have that authority.

Well, the Republican National Committee went further in trying to pro-

mote the Big Lie and called what happened on January 6 in this Capitol Building legitimate political discourse.

Do they honestly believe that breaking down the windows and doors of this building to enter as an unruly mob is legitimate political discourse?

Do they believe that spraying toxic bear spray in the faces of our policemen is legitimate political discourse?

Do they believe that 140 injured policemen and 5 people who are deceased as a result of that mob action was somehow legitimate political discourse and that, as they came into the Chamber—these demonstrators who were aping themselves in front of cameras for their friends to take pictures—sitting in the chair where the Acting President pro tempore is sitting today and going through my desk and other desks here to see if there was anything they could take a picture of or steal—that that was legitimate political discourse?

Do they believe that incitement to violence by President Trump to send this mob up here was legitimate political discourse?

Shame on the Grand Old Party. Shame on Mr. Lincoln's party. They should know better. I am glad that a handful have stood up and spoken up. I wish more would.

If we are ever going to put an end to Trumpism in this country and in the Republican Party, only the Republicans can get it done. They have to decide that enough is enough and step forward.

It is interesting to me that, when Senator MCCONNELL came to the floor a few minutes ago, he talked about the statement of some Big Ten professor—he didn't name his name—who was not respectful of our police. Of all of the things that happened in the last week that were not respectful of the police, I would certainly add the Salt Lake City Republican national meeting, where the attack on our police was characterized as legitimate political discourse. An incitement to violence was legitimate political discourse.

America is better than that. I sincerely hope that real leaders within the Republican Party will reclaim their party and put an end to this madness that Trumpism has brought them.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, on an entirely different subject, on March 26, 2020, America passed a grim milestone when 1,000 Americans died that day of COVID—front page news. Two months later, after Memorial Day, we passed another terrible milestone when 100,000 had died of COVID. As many Americans had died from COVID as from the Korean, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan wars combined. By this past September, the number of Americans who had been lost to COVID hit 695,000—memorialized in a heart-breaking sea of small, white flags that covered our National Mall. This week-

end, the United States hit another staggering milestone—900,000 Americans dead from COVID. In Illinois, there have been 31,000 lives lost.

COVID-19 is now the third leading cause of death in the United States, behind only heart disease and cancer. At the rate we are going, experts say it is likely the United States will reach 1 million COVID deaths in just a few weeks.

What makes these numbers even more tragic is that so many of the deaths could have been prevented. COVID vaccines are safe and free and highly effective at preventing COVID hospitalization and death. Think about this: According to new data from the CDC, unvaccinated individuals are 97 times more likely to die of COVID compared to those who have been vaccinated and boosted—97 times more likely to die if you are unvaccinated.

Just last night, I watched "60 Minutes." There was a presentation by nurses in Louisville, KY, the home State of the Republican leader. They talked about the devastating toll on their emotions and even their physical bodies when it comes to the deaths that they have to witness every day. They are beaten down, these nurses. They say that some 25 percent, if I remember correctly, have already resigned and have said they can't take it anymore. And to think how many of those hospitalizations could have been avoided if vaccinations had become universal across this country as they should be.

Well, this evening, Members of Congress will gather on the steps of the Capitol for a moment of silence to remember the 900,000 souls we have lost to this virus. May their families and loved ones find peace.

We have the tools and knowledge to bring this pandemic under control if only we would use them.

#### THE ECONOMY

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, there was another set of numbers that was released last Friday that testifies to good news, and America needs it. It testifies to the resilience of the American people and the American spirit.

Many economists had braced for a disastrous January jobs report. The most optimistic among them predicted that the U.S. economy might grow by 150,000 or maybe 250,000 jobs last month. Some warned that it could show massive job losses. Here is what we learned:

Despite the Omicron surge and the global supply chain shortages, U.S. employers added 467,000 new jobs last month—467,000. On top of that, the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows us the economy added 700,000 more jobs in November and December than we initially calculated. All told, the U.S. economy has added 6.6 million jobs in the last year—the strongest first-year job gain of any President in history.

When Joe Biden took over the office a little over a year ago, he inherited